Religion, Conflict and Dialogue (RCD)

Study Plan

1 Organization of the Master’s Degree Programme

Study Plan
Study Plan is a plan prepared by the Programme Committee of Religion, Conflict and Dialogue programme based on the rules and regulations of the Faculty of Theology (Standing orders of the Faculty of Theology) and the University of Helsinki (Regulations on Degrees and the Protection of Students’ Rights at the University of Helsinki). Both documents can be found in Flamma Intranet (See: Faculty of Theology - For Students – Current information on teaching - Information for degree students).

It states the programme’s structure, core contents, curriculum at a general level, the expected and demanded learning outcome, the progression of students within the Programme, admission requirements, forms of teaching and examinations, graduation and procedures for student complaints.

Programme Committee
The general management and planning of the RCD programme is handled by a Programme Committee consisting of the prevailing Programme Leader, International Affairs Officer, two teachers teaching in the programme and one student representing all the students elected (see 6.2). The tasks of the Programme Committee are

- Marketing of the Programme
- Co-coordination of the Admission and Co-selection of the new students
- Administrative tasks related to organizing the programme
- Evaluation and development of the programme

Legislation
The provision and completion of degrees shall be governed by the Universities Act (yliopistolaki, 558/2009), the Government Decree on University Degrees (valtioneuvoston asetus yliopistojen tutkinnoista, 794/2004), the Government Decree on the amendment of the Government Decree on university degrees (valtioneuvoston asetus yliopistojen tutkinnoista annetun valtioneuvoston asetuksen muuttamisesta, issued 17 December 2009) and the Standing Orders of Faculty of Theology (teologisen tiedekunnan pysyväismääräykset) issued 31 May 2011.

2 Aim of the programme and learning outcome

2.1. Aim of the programme
The aim of RCD programme is to prepare students to carry out critical analyses of the role of reli-
2.2 Learning outcome
The objective of the Master of Theology degree (Standing Orders of Faculty of Theology, 31 May 2011) is to provide students with

- a thorough knowledge of the major subject and knowledge of the basics of the other disciplines included in the degree programme;
- the ability to apply scholarly knowledge and scientific methods;
- the ability to serve professionally in theological expert and development positions;
- eligibility for postgraduate research education;
- good communication and language skills.

Building on the students’ previously completed Bachelor’s Degrees, the Master’s Degree Programme in Religion, Conflict and Dialogue enables students to acquire

- skills and abilities to conduct research on religious, political and social issues;
- the ability to select and the skill to use appropriate methodologies from a variety of disciplines to understand the role of religion and dialogue in conflict and conflict resolution;
- critical knowledge of the understanding of conflict and dialogue within at least two religious traditions;
- the competence to take part in and understand conflict resolution situations, the mastery of conflict diagnosis tools from the point of view of early detection and prevention;
- the ability to communicate research results in a variety of media.

2.3 Content and approach
Thematic focus: Religion, Conflict and Dialogue
Religions can be seen as both a reason for and a solution to conflicts between individuals, groups and nations. Ignoring the religious point of view can be misleading in conflict prevention or resolution. However, dialogue between religious individuals or bodies is a challenge that requires both the proper knowledge and skills.

RCD programme provides a basic understanding of different religions and their roles in conflicts and reconciliation. The programme discusses the many dimensions of religions, conflicts and dialogue. Though rooted in theology and religious studies, it is multidisciplinary in outlook and combines theoretical and practical viewpoints. Furthermore the programme prepares students to undertake expertise roles in conflict issues involving religions.

3 A two-year Master Programme in Religion, Conflict and Dialogue
3.1 Periods of study, modules and progression
In total, the RCD programme is assigned 120 ECTS credits, consisting of eight periods of full-time study, each period covering 15 ECTS credits, except the final two periods of study consisting altogether of 40 ECTS credits in the form of the master’s thesis. Each study unit (5 ECTS credits) must be completed before the end of the following semester unless otherwise stated. There is a steady progressing culminating in the spring semester of the second year of studies with the master’s thesis. It follows that the master’s thesis should be assessed as the final module in the pro-
gramme.

The following is a schematic representation of how student may progress from one term to the next:

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### 3.2. Teaching

The teaching of the individual study units of the RCD programme combines lectures, workshops, reading groups and tutorials, open symposiums, reflection etc.

Teaching is conducted during the periods from September to mid-December and from mid-January to the beginning of May. See the more detailed information for teaching periods in Flamma Intranet. (See: Faculty of Theology - For Students – Current information on teaching - Information for degree students)

The language of the teaching and examinations in the programme is English.

### 4 Content of the individual courses

#### 4.1 Contemporary research and practice in religion, conflict and dialogue with methodology to case studies (5 ECTS credits) (Introductory studies)

**Aims**

This module gives an overview to the history and the current state of conflict studies. The module has three aims: first, to place the role of religion among the factors leading to and maintaining as well as reconciling conflicts, second, to get acquainted with methodological approaches in conflict studies, and third, to identify a specific conflict that each student will analyse in his/her Master’s thesis during the second year of the RCD programme and to start gathering material for the study.
Syllabus
Students will study the history of peace and conflict studies and different methodological approaches in the field. The themes of the module may include:

- a historical overview of peace and conflict studies;
- peace and conflict studies as a practical enterprise and a theme of research;
- conceptions of peace and conflict;
- basic concepts for understanding and analysing conflicts and dialogue;
- methodological approaches in peace and conflict studies;
- scholarly criticism of peace and conflict studies.

Other topics may be offered depending on the availability of subject specialists.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge & Understanding
   - a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the nature and development of peace and conflict studies;
   - a critical understanding of a range of methodological approaches and their appropriate application in peace and conflict studies;
   - a deep appreciation of the main contemporary scholarly trends in peace and conflict studies.

2. Subject specific skills
   - advanced skills in using conceptual tools for analysing different sorts of conflicts;
   - the ability to gather material for the study of a particular conflict from a range of sources;
   - the ability to apply philosophical research methods to the study of contemporary conflict and dialogue;
   - a critical evaluation of different models of conflict study.

3. Transferable skills
   - The student will demonstrate the ability to;
   - convey their responses in a coherent and objective manner in writing and orally.

Teaching and Learning Methods
The module will be taught through a combination of lectures, workshops, a reading group and tutorials. Lectures with a workshop will normally last 4 hours during which students will be introduced to the topic, work in small groups and gather the outcome of the work in a joint discussion. Along with lectures, the students will meet in a reading group where they study fundamental conflict studies literature. During periods 2-4 the RCD students will meet with the Programme Director to discuss the specific conflict they are going to analyse in their Master’s thesis during the second year of the RCD programme. The lectures and the workshops will be open to all students of the University but the reading group and tutorials will be exclusively for RCD students.

Assessment Method
The module is completed by short reading group reports (appr. 1 page per week) and a lecture diary (8-10 pages). The reading group reports will be used as material in the Advanced academic writing and research skills module. Students will have to undertake considerable amount of private
study to prepare themselves for the lectures, workshops and the reading group. Note! Unlike the assessment of other study units the assessment of this study unit will take place at the end of the first year.

**Module Evaluation**
Students will be asked to complete a 'feedback form' at the end of the module. This information will be used for course development.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

**4.2 Advanced academic writing and research skills (5 ECTS credits) (Introductory studies)**

**Aims**
The aim of this course is to achieve a high level of academic English required for completing study-related academic texts (e.g. theses, reports, essays, academic articles) through participating Academic writing 1 (2 ECTS credits) and Academic Writing 2 (2 ECTS credits) courses. The module also aims to provide students with information acquisition (research) skills needed in taking the studies in the programme (1 ECTS credits).

**Learning outcome**
By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:
1. Knowledge & Understanding of
   - the basics of the copyright
2. Subject specific skills
   - the ability to use the services of the university libraries;
   - the ability to look for information from various data acquisition sources;
   - the knowledge of how to implement research ethics existing at the university.
3. Transferable skills
   - the ability to produce high-level academic texts;
   - the ability to use different search techniques.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**
The module will be taught through a combination of lectures and hands-on workshops. To meet the goals, students are expected to participate actively in the tasks and other work agreed upon at the beginning of the course, as well as meet the deadlines set. 1 credit consists of 14 contact hours and 13 hours of independent work. In addition the Programme Leader will assign students other information research tasks related to their case studies.

**Assessment Method**
Academic Writing Course 1 and 2: A variety of evaluation methods will be used, including peer- and self-assessment, and feedback given by the teacher. There will be no final test.
Information acquisition (research) skills: Attendance of two sessions, both including a small homework related to the topic.
Module Evaluation
Students will be asked to complete a 'feedback form' at the end of the module. This information will be used for course development.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

4.3 Media Analysis (5 ECTS credits) (Introductory studies)

Aims
This module gives students an overview of some of the essential research traditions and analytical tools available in the field of media studies. Simultaneously, it provides conceptual tools for the students’ own media analysis of a chosen specific conflict situation, its media coverage and the different ways the conflict might be reflected on and dealt with in social media, newspapers, TV, and other media. The overall aim of the module is to introduce critical, academic thinking regarding different communication phenomena – a skill essential in understanding conflicts and their dynamics in contemporary societies.

Learning outcome
By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge & Understanding
   - critical understanding on the different roles used by, projected to, and even forced upon media in conflict situations
   - critical understanding on the discourses of presenting conflict, violence, and reconciliation.
   - knowledge on key concepts in media studies

2. Subject specific skills
   - preliminary skills to analyze the functioning, meaning, and significance of different signs, symbols, and media in distinctive conflict situations
   - skills to scrutinize central concepts and research ideas in relation to actual cases and media occasions according to students’ own interests

3. Transferable skills
   The student will demonstrate ability to
   - discuss critically media events
   - share analytical ideas and discuss views and findings together with others
   - utilize peer assessment in one’s own work.

Syllabus
1. Introduction – essential concepts and ideas, work assignments and bibliography;
2. Themes of analysis for case studies – students’ own interests, potential cases and sources;
3. Media history – a glimpse of the past, understanding contemporary: the development and function of different media;
4. Media as rituals – rituals of violence and atonement, the ritual space of media;
5. Media and the construction of meaning – cultural semiotics and media analysis;
6. Media and power – media as a space of conflict, as a means of the exercise of power and control, emancipating media;
7. Conclusion – How different media reflect upon, participate in, ignite and impede, interpret and shape conflicts – students’ presentations upon, participate in, ignite and impede, interpret and shape conflicts – students’ presentations

*Teaching and learning methods*
Contact teaching, the acquisition of sources and literature for each case study, student paper 15–20 pages (relevant literature for each topic of the student presentations will be incorporated).

The learning methods of the module combine lectures and discussions, group work, the acquisition of relevant source material, individual reading and writing, students’ peer assessment discussions, and students’ presentations.

*Assessment Method*
The module is completed by students’ analytical presentations on different media phenomena. These content, quality, compilation, and relevance of these presentations, together with each student’s overall interaction and participation on the course module, will be assessed in the end of the course.

*Module Evaluation*
Students will be asked to complete a ‘feedback form’ at the end of the module. This information will be used for course development.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

4.4 Key Concepts - Religion, Conflict and Dialogue (5 ECTS credits) (Theological, Philosophical, Historical and Empirical studies)

*Aims*
This module will discuss the key concepts of the Master’s Programme: how to understand “Religion”, “Conflict” and “Dialogue” and related concepts. The module hence provides theoretic tools for the other modules.

*Syllabus*
Students will study key concepts and discuss their various meanings. The focus is on “Religion”, “Conflict” and “Dialogue” but many other related concepts are also discussed. The course is conceptual and theoretical by nature but also discusses empirical cases so as to demonstrate the usage of concepts. The concepts to be discussed include:

- “Religion”; related concepts: faith, spirituality, church, God; religion in relationship to science, art, politics, morality; religious leaders; psychology, sociology and philosophy of religion
- “Conflict”; Conflicts on international, national, local and individual levels; disagreement
- “Dialogue”; Dia-logue vs. Di-logue, Mutual learning, Dialogue vs. Persuasion / Proclamation / Mediation
- Reconciliation, trust, guilt, forgiveness, justice
- Violence, peace making
- Rights, human rights, responsibility, rights-based approach
- Local ownership, constitutional process, decentralisation, security sector reform, international facilitators
Other topics may be offered depending on the availability of subject specialists

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge & Understanding
   - a comprehensive knowledge of the key concepts related to subject matter
   - a thorough understanding of various meanings of the key concepts
   - a comprehension of the conceptual difficulty and ambiguity of the key concepts in the field

2. Subject specific skills
   - advanced skills in conceptual thinking in addition to critically reading and analysing texts
   - the ability to recognize and evaluate various nuances of the concepts
   - the ability to focus on chosen concepts and analyse them

3. Transferable skills
   The student will demonstrate an ability to
   - critically analyse the use of concepts in given texts
   - analytically discuss and present findings regarding the use of concepts
   - carry out research that is conceptually clear and accurate
   - discuss relevant topics with precise and exact concepts

**Teaching and learning methods**

The module consists of both lectures and seminars, both taking place on a weekly basis. Lectures will last 4 hours during which students will be introduced to the key concepts, their various interpretations and interconnectedness. There will be some guest lecturers and lectures by the tutor of the module.

In seminars students will read and analyse text and the use of concepts. The lectures will be open to all students of the University but the seminar will be exclusively for RCD students.

**Assessment Method**

The module is completed by an essay (8-10 pages) on a few of the concepts discussed in the lectures and seminars. The concepts to be discussed in the essay will be agreed with the lecturer who will also provide more specific instruction on the essay work.

Attending the seminar will require some preparatory work every week.

**Module Evaluation**

Students will be asked to complete a 'feedback form' at the end of the module. This information will be used for course development.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD study catalogue in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

**4.5 World Religions (5 ECTS credits) (Theological, Philosophical, Historical and Empirical studies)**

**Aims**

This module will, first, give an overview of world religions and, second, focus on particular religious traditions depending on the students’ research interests. World religions will be approached from the perspective of religious dialogue in particular.
**Syllabus**
The course will cover world religions in different geographic areas:
- Middle-Eastern religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam;
- Indian-based religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism;
- Chinese and Japanese religions: Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Buddhism;
- Indigenous religions.

The above-mentioned religions will be covered depending on the availability of subject specialists.

**Learning Outcome**
1. Knowledge & Understanding
   - how different religious traditions have reasoned the necessity for religious dialogue;
   - how do they engage in religious dialogue;
   - what are the main modes of religious dialogue in contemporary world;
   - how religious actors engage in religious dialogue in everyday life.

2. Subject specific skills
   - the ability to apply theories of religious dialogue to a case study of a religious tradition;
   - the ability to apply anthropological and sociological methods in studying world religions.

3. Transferable skills
   The student will demonstrate an ability to
   - critically assess information presented in a variety of formats;
   - communicate their research findings in a coherent manner both orally and in writing;
   - analyse different socio-religious phenomena in light of contemporary research on world religions.

**Assessment Method**
The module is completed by an essay (8-10) on one of the topics discussed in the lectures and a seminar. Students will study reading material for each seminar session and will also give a presentation on the topic of their essay.

**Module Evaluation**
Students will be asked to complete a 'feedback form' at the end of the module. This information will be used for course development.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD study catalogue in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

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**4.6 Religion, Conflict and Ethics (5 ECTS credits)** (Theological, Philosophical, Historical and Empirical studies)

**Aims**
This module will provide an introduction to a variety of ethical theories and theologies on religion-related conflicts and their preconditions in the Western world and beyond.

**Syllabus**
Students will study key topics related to conflicts, their preconditions and religion, first, in the history of in ethical theories and theologies. The authors and contexts to be explored include:
- Plato and Aristotle on just and harmonious co-existence;
- Augustine on the earthly and heavenly cities and the emergence of the just war theory;
- The crusades and their heritage;
- Reformation-related conflicts and cuius regio, eius religio;
- Religion and the Enlightenment paradigm for peace and justice;
- Theological perspectives on Colonialism and its heritage.

Second, recent theories and theologies will be introduced and discuss as related, e.g., to:
- The Nazi Regime;
- The Cold War;
- Political Liberalism and its Pacifist critics;
- Religious Dialogue for Peaceful Development in a global age;
- Roles of religion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today;
- Roles of religion in the Bangladeshi and South Asian conflicts today.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:

1. **Knowledge & understanding**
   - a knowledge of the roles of religious beliefs, practices and traditions in some of the most influential theories and theologies (the ones to be studied in the course) on conflicts and their preconditions;
   - how these theories and theologies can be relevant in the analysis of the studied conflicts in their historical contexts;
   - how the studied theories and theologies can be helpful in the promotion of peaceful justice and pragmatic conflict resolution and how a flawed use of the same can also be a part of the problem.

2. **Subject specific skills**
   - ability to study historical theories and theologies of ethics taking into account their interconnections to their contextual backgrounds with their social, political, economic, military and especially religious conflicts;
   - ability to apply theories and theologies of ethics in the analysis and pragmatic encounter of some contemporary conflicts.

3. **Transferable skills**
   - capability to critically assess theories and theologies of ethics in terms of conceptual and argumentation analysis taking into account relevant historical contexts and pragmatic endeavours;
   - capability to take credibly part in the public discussion of both historical and recent religion-related conflicts and their preconditions as well as initiatives for their resolution;
   - capability to seek new information and to pose new relevant questions in the field of religion, conflict, and ethics as well as to assess and utilize new information in appropriate and fruitful ways.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Lectures, Open Symposium and Reflection. The teaching events will be constructed so as to support the students to achieve the learning outcomes of the course as fully as possible and to contrib-
ute to the learning of the whole group and also real-life public discussion of contemporary con-

Assessment Method
The module is complemented, in the case of master’s programme students, by participating (al-
most all of) the teaching events and by having a presentation in the RCD Open Symposium and
writing an essay (8-10 pages) on the same topic, making use of the relevant literature. The presenta-
tion and the essay must resonate with one or more key topics of the course. In addition, students
are expected to write a learning diary in which they briefly discuss some other key themes of the
course.

The students not involved in the master’s degree programme will have their presentations in
the ‘Symposium and reflection for other participants’ in which also the master’s programme stu-
dents will be present. Otherwise the course requirements and assessment criteria are the same for
all participants.

Module Evaluation
Students will be asked to complete a 'feedback form' at the end of the module. This information
will be used for course development.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indica-
tive bibliography in RCD study catalogue in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

4.7 Society and Community Cohesion (5 ECTS credits) (Theological, Philosophical, Historical
and Empirical studies)
Aims
This module will provide an insight into the theories, application as well as process and creation of
social cohesion with help of examples.

Syllabus
Social cohesion denotes a process and the creation of societal conditions that will significantly
enhance people’s opportunities. This becomes the basis for an understanding of social cohesion in
which it is projected that the participation of people in society will lead to new dynamics of posi-
tive identity formation, active citizenship, building of self-esteem and sense of belonging. In policy
contexts social cohesion is related to social capital that in the broader social science literature is
frequently associated with the social strengths of religion and religious agency. The existence of
social capital in the form of networks, social connections, particular values and relationships of
trust is identified as a necessary resource which can be utilized to meet the objectives of social
cohesion.

Learning outcome
By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:
1. Knowledge & Understanding
   • a comprehensive knowledge of the key concepts related to society and community cohe-
sion
   • a thorough understanding of various meanings of the key concepts social cohesion and so-
cial capital
   • a comprehension of the conceptual difficulty and ambiguity of the key concepts in the field
2. Subject specific skills
   - advanced skills in conceptual thinking in addition to critically reading and analysing texts
   - the ability to focus on chosen concepts and analyse them

3. Transferable skills
   - the student will demonstrate an ability to critically analyse the use of concepts in given texts
   - analytically discuss and present findings regarding the use of concepts
   - carry out research that is conceptually clear and accurate
   - discuss relevant topics with precise and exact concepts
   - has the ability to apply this knowledge into their own case studies in RCD.

Assessment Method
The students involved in the master’s degree programme will attend in study group sessions, required readings prior to each session, short essays. The students not involved in the master’s degree programme will attend in lectures, required readings, and learning diary.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD study catalogue in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

4.8 Historical Perspectives to Religion, Conflict and Dialogue (5 ECTS credits) (Theological, Philosophical, Historical and Empirical studies)

Aims
This module will explore different historical examples of conflict and its resolution where religion has been a key factor in order to provide the historical background of some contemporary conflicts.

Syllabus
Students will study key topics in the causes of conflict involving religion and investigate the role religion might have played in the continuance, avoidance or resolution of conflict. The topics will be chosen from all periods of history and may include:
   - the role of religious scriptures;
   - social identity in early Jewish Christian relationships;
   - Christians, Jews and Pagans in the early Christian apologetic literature;
   - Religious Conflict and Toleration in the ‘Holy Land’ from Constantine to the Arab Conquest;
   - Muslims, Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe;
   - inter-Christian conflict in early modern Europe;
   - Nazism and Religion;
   - Religion and Atheism in Communist Europe;
   - Near East Conflicts and Religion;
   - Indian Religions in Conflict and Dialogue;
   - Ecumenical Approaches to Conflict and Dialogue.

Other topics may be offered depending on the availability of subject specialists.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:
1. Knowledge & Understanding
   - a detailed knowledge of the causes, conduct and resolution of conflict situations occurring in different historical periods;
   - how different religious traditions have justified their attitudes to war and peace using theological and scriptural criteria;
   - an understanding of the sources of changing attitudes to conflict and religious dialogue within and between religions are determined by intellectual, political and social contexts.

2. Subject specific skills
   - advanced skills in the interpretation of primary sources, used in English translation;
   - the ability to identify scholarly presuppositions and critical evaluate contemporary historical writings as they relate to the topics studied;
   - the ability to apply historical research methods to the study of contemporary conflict and dialogue.

3. Transferable skills
   The student will demonstrate an ability to
   - critically assess information presented in a variety of formats;
   - communicate their responses in a coherent and objective manner in writing and orally;
   - undertake effective research using printed and electronic resources, with sensitivity to the genre and perspective of primary and secondary sources.

Teaching and Learning Methods
The module will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminars. Lectures will normally last 2 hours during which students will be introduced to the topic, to the relevant sources and to key interpretations. Lectures will be given by a number of different people in order to make use of the research expertise in the Faculty.

Each lecture will be followed by a seminar of 1 hour in which RCD students study a key primary or secondary source in detail with the lecturer. The lectures will be open to all students of the University but the seminar will be exclusively for RCD students.

Assessment Method
The module is completed by an essay (8-10 pages) on one of the topics discussed in the lectures and seminars, or on another topic agreed with the lecturers. Students will also be encouraged to undertake some private study to prepare them for the lectures and seminars.

Module Evaluation
Students will be asked to complete a 'feedback form' at the end of the module. This information will be used for course development.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD course catalogue in Weboodi.

4.9 Optional modules can deepen TPHE studies or can be taken outside the faculty (20 ECTS credits) (Theological, Philosophical, Historical and Empirical studies)
The student has to decide during the first fall semester which studies she or he wishes to include to her/his Optional studies.
If the student wishes to deepen any of the study units under TPHE studies she or he is asked to turn to the responsible teacher of the given study unit for more information on the subject and how to examine the studies.

In case of choosing studies from another faculty of University of Helsinki or from another university the student is required to find out how to proceed from the International Affairs Officer of the Faculty of Theology.

4.10 Master's Thesis Seminar (5 ECTS credits) (Theological, Philosophical, Historical and Empirical studies)
The Master’s thesis is written in conjunction with a seminar to be led by a Programme Leader who offers guidance in the treatment of subject matter, methodology and compositional techniques; the seminar includes the composition of a personal study plan.

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD study catalogue in WebOodi.

4.11 Master's Thesis, 40 (ECTS credits) (Theological, Philosophical, Historical and Empirical studies)

Aim
With the Master’s thesis, the student completes the RCD programme with a final comprehensive study of one particular within the field of the programme chosen by the student and approved by the Programme Leader. The student must complete all other study units before she or he can hand in her or his Master’s thesis.

Learning outcome
Through the independent work on the subject the student must
- acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter, the relevant scholarly debates and the relevant primary resources;
- be able to comprehensively analyse and discuss the subject matter, the scholarly literature and the sources;
- relate this knowledge, analysis and discussion in the form of an extensive written thesis meeting academic standards.

Teaching
The student work independently but under supervision.

Examination
The student hands in a master’s thesis written independently by the student. The thesis must be between 60 and 100 pages long.

4.12 Influencing and Prevention work (5 ECTS credits) (Applied studies)

See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.
4.13 Negotiation – How to resolve, manage and reconcile conflicts? (5 ECTS credits) (Applied studies)
See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

4.14 Internship / Project work related to the topics above (5 ECTS credits) (Applied studies)
See the contact information of the responsible teacher, dates of teaching, examination and indicative bibliography in RCD course catalogue in WebOodi.

5 Admission, entrance requirements and degree
5.1 Admission
The maximum and minimum number of students to be admitted each year in the RCD programme is fixed and announced annually before the end of April in the academic year prior to the academic year during which the applications for the programme are submitted and processed.

Applicant must document (by submitting a certified transcript and Bachelor or Master’s certificate stating the subjects studies and grades obtained) that they have completed or are completing a relevant Bachelor’s or Master’s degree and that they have obtained a sufficient proficiency in English.

The Programme Leader of RCD compiles together with the International Affairs Officer a presentation of the applicants to be admitted to the programme. The applicants listed in the presentation are ranked based on the relevance of their previous studies, Curriculum Vitae and motivation letter. Based on this document The Programme Committee of RCD formulates a recommendation, which will be approved by the Selection Committee of the Faculty of Theology.

Application procedure, admission requirements and selection criteria follow the rules of University of Helsinki and Faculty of Theology.

5.2 Entrance requirements
The RCD programme is open to students with a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree with a major in e.g. theology, the study of religion, other humanities, social sciences, behavioural sciences, law. The programme with it’s study units and courses progresses from the learning outcome, knowledge, skills and abilities obtained by the students through these Bachelor or Master’s programmes.

The language of the programme is English. Therefore it is a final prerequisite for admittance that an applicant can document proficiency in English at the level required by the University of Helsinki.

5.3 Rules for complaining about decisions of admittance
If an applicant is not accepted into the programme, the applicant may appeal the decision in accordance with the procedures for such appeals ordered by the University of Helsinki.

5.4 Awarding of degrees
The awarded degree is Master of Theology. The student is entitled to receive the diploma no later than two months (July not counting) after the thesis has been approved by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Theology and all courses requirements fulfilled.

If a student leaves the programme without fulfilling the degree, she or he can request documentation stating which parts of the programme (stating ECTS credits) the student has successfully completed and the results and grades from the courses.
6 Studying in the programme, the student representation in the Programme Committee, the Graduation

6.1 Studying in the programme

Personal Study Plan
To facilitate the long-term planning of studies, each student is required to make a personal study plan. To facilitate the monitoring of progress in studies, the study plan will be checked regularly. However, at the University of Helsinki, the personal study plan is not considered to be a binding agreement between the student and the University.

Etappi Checkpoint System
A system of "checkpoints" is used to support smooth progress in studies and, consequently, a faster completion of degrees. With the system of checkpoints, study progress is monitored by assessing the accumulation of credits. The Faculties determine the minimum number of credits required at each checkpoint. Study progress will be supported through the personal study plan and intensive supervision and tutoring.

Regulations on the Normative Duration of Study
In the Universities Act that regulates the Universities and studies in Finland, there are regulations on the normative durations for the attainment of degrees. This means that the study times are limited for those students whose right to pursue a degree has begun on 1.8.2005 or later.

As a registered student you can follow your remaining study time in WebOodi study system. If you change your registration status during the academic year, the end date for your right to study is updated in WebOodi the following day. If your registration status (attending/non-attending) changes during the course of a term, the registration status valid on the last date of the term in question determines the registration status for the entire term. The end date of the right to study is also printed on the certificates of attendance and transcripts.

Target durations of Master’s degree studies
According to the Universities Act the normative or target duration for the completion of the higher academic degree (Master) is two academic years.

When the student has been admitted to pursue the higher academic degree (Master’s) she or he has the right to exceed the normative duration of degrees defined in the Act by a maximum of two years, i.e. the degree should be completed in four academic years. The duration of study does not include:
- absences due to statutory reasons such as voluntary military service or conscription or maternity, paternity or parental leave
- absences of a maximum of two academic years (four terms) for which you have registered as a non-attending student. The terms when you have registered as non-attending do not have to be consecutive.

Applying for an extension of the right to study
If the student has not completed his or her degree within the normative time for the completion of degrees the faculty may grant an extension. The prerequisite is that the student presents a goal-oriented and feasible plan for the completion of your studies. Applying for an extension of the right to study takes place at the Host Faculty.

Registration to teaching and examination
Registration to all teaching and examinations organized by the Faculty of Theology is required. Registration is made by using the WebOodi system at www.helsinki.fi/weboodi. In order to use-
WebOodi, the student needs to have the user account and password to the University computer network. It is possible to register at WebOodi 30 days prior to the exam. The deadline for registration is 10 days before the exam (on Tuesday).

**Study Units and Lecture courses**
Degree programmes consist of study units, each of which usually lasts for one or four teaching periods. Each study unit must be completed before the end of the following semester. Studies completed as part of a study unit are valid until the end of the following term, unless otherwise stated.

The Faculty unit for the development of teaching and learning has decided that exemptions to the above one-term rule may be granted for the following reasons: 1) illness (medical certificate required), 2) military or non-military service, 3) pregnancy, or 4) another compelling reason. When applying for an exemption, students must contact the person responsible for the study unit in question. Study units completed after 1 August 2005 which are not part of a module will expire in 10 years. Study modules will not expire.

A lecture course is usually a 24-hour series of lectures with an essay or a test at the end of the course. A lecture series may be given throughout a term (e.g. 2 hours per week), or intensively (e.g. 2 hours every day for 2 weeks).

A study unit is a larger entity and it can be completed in such a way described by the teacher responsible for the given study unit. It usually combines a lecture course with a list of reading which is tested separately. The content of one study unit may thus differ from year to year, depending on the lecture series available. Each unit may include lecture series and their examinations, reading, essays, independent research, group work, and practical training. Not all units include all forms of study. Each lecture series can be used only once (in one study unit).

Each study unit is graded separately, and these grades together determine the final grade of the degree. An exam on the required reading may be taken on specific faculty examinations days.

**ECTS-compatible credits**
One ECTS-compatible credit (hereafter “credit”) requires an average of 26.7 hours of work. The annual workload of students is 60 credits, or 1,600 hours. The workload consists of studies completed during teaching periods and at other times. Credits are based on the required workload. This means, among other things, that teachers assign credits for set texts based on the purpose, workload and demands of such texts, not just on the number of pages students must read. When determining credits, the Faculty aims to take the independent work completed by students more fully into account. Students’ workload consists of lectures, small group work, seminars, assignments, set texts, examinations, independent study, online work, etc.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**
The basic mission of the University of Helsinki is the quest for the truth. This entails that question of research ethics and professional ethics are to be treated with the appropriate seriousness. Cheating in all its forms violates the essence of the university. See for more information on the subject in Flamma Intranet (Faculty of Theology - For Students – Current information on teaching – Information for degree students).

**6.2 Student representation in the Programme Committee**
One student member of the Programme Committee are elected for one year from the student population of the RCD programme by the students once a year before the end of September.

Elections will be organized in connection of the teaching organized by the Programme Leader
during the first period of the on-going autumn semester. In subsequent years the first year students will elect a first-year student while second year students will elect a second-year student.

6.3 Master’s thesis and Maturity test

Thesis seminar and Master’s thesis

Students pursuing a Master of Theology degree must write a Master’s thesis (40 credits) in their major subject. In the RCD programme the major subject is The Religion, Conflict and Dialogue. The Master’s thesis must show the student’s familiarity with scientific thought and his or her command of the necessary research methods, knowledge of the thesis topic and ability to communicate scientifically. The language of the Master’s thesis in the RCD programme is English.

Guidelines for the format of theses

See for more information on the subject in Flamma Intranet (Faculty of Theology – For Students – Studies, Studying and Graduation – Completion of studies, examinations and graduation).

Objectives and assessment criteria for Master’s thesis

The Master’s thesis must demonstrate a student’s familiarity with academic thinking, mastery of the necessary research methods, knowledge of the thesis topic and ability to communicate scientifically. The recommended length of a Master’s thesis is 60–100 pages. The Faculty will approve or reject the thesis based on examiner statements. (See the standing regulations of the Faculty of Theology, chapter III, section 8. in Flamma Intranet: Faculty of Theology - For Students - Current information on teaching – Information for degree students).

The research must be honest and fulfil the norms of research ethics in terms of documentation, references, relations to other research and possible experiment settings. (See Good Scientific Practice and Procedures for Handling Misconduct and Fraud in Science, published by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics in 2002.)

The significance of the assessment criteria below for the final grade of the thesis may be emphasized in different ways, depending on the distinguishing characteristics of the thesis and the discipline.

Assessment criteria

1. Formulating and discussing the research question
   - The appropriateness of the research topic, its chosen limitation and perspective
   - Posing and justifying the research question
   - Focusing on issues that are central to the research question

2. Use of sources
   - The quality, relevance and sufficiency of the source material in terms of the topic and research question
   - Understanding and use of the sources

3. Knowledge of research literature, its use and assessment
   - Placing the research in the appropriate context of previous research
   - Independent and critical analysis of previous research, theories, methods and material is considered an additional merit

4. Analysis and command of methodology
   - Choice and justification of research methods
   - Command of the chosen research methods
   - Clarity of argumentation
5. Independent observations and conclusions
- Answering the research question and reporting on results
- Justification and reliability of conclusions
- Observations which are interesting for the field or society at large will be considered an additional merit

6. Structure and readability of the thesis
- Consistency and clarity of the thesis structure
- Transitions between paragraphs and chapters and the flow of the text
- Spelling and clarity of language
- Format of endnotes, footnotes and the bibliography as well as the overall appearance of the thesis

Description of grades
The assessment of approved Master’s theses at the Faculty of Theology is based on the grade descriptions presented below. The particular traits of the discipline and the thesis should be considered when applying the assessment criteria.

Grading scale (improbatur, approbatur, lubenter approbatur, non sine laude approbatur, cum laude approbatur, magna cum laude approbatur, eximia cum laude approbatur and laudatur)

Improbatur
“Rejected”. The work does not fulfil to an acceptable degree the requirements, assessment criteria and/or ethical norms set for Master’s theses.

Approbatur
“Approved”. The work fulfils both the Faculty requirements for a Master’s thesis and the ethical norms, but is significantly deficient.

Lubenter approbatur
“Readily approved”. The work fulfils both the Faculty requirements for a Master’s thesis and the ethical norms, but when examined in the context of the assessment criteria its deficiencies are not sufficiently compensated by its merits.

Non sine laude approbatur
“Approved not without praise”. The work fulfils both the Faculty requirements for Master’s theses and the ethical norms. In terms of the assessment criteria, the thesis has satisfactory sections, but they do not sufficiently compensate for the weaknesses of the work.

Cum laude approbatur
“Approved with praise”. In terms of the assessment criteria, the thesis is of a good standard and fulfils the ethical norms. The concepts and language used are clear. The research problem, methods and results are well justified and based on relevant material. The distinct merits of the thesis can compensate for possible deficiencies that may have emerged in the light of the assessment criteria.

Magna cum laude approbatur
“Approved with high praise”. In terms of the assessment criteria, the thesis has distinct merits that are not undermined by its deficiencies in other respects. The thesis fulfils the ethical norms.
**Eximia cum laude approbatur**

“Approved with extraordinary praise”. In terms of the assessment criteria, the thesis has significant merits and is without deficiencies that reduce the overall quality. The thesis fulfils the ethical norms.

**Laudatur**

“Praised”. In the light of all essential assessment criteria, the thesis is highly distinguished. The text is of a high scholarly standard, and sections could be published as scholarly articles with minor modifications. The thesis fulfils the ethical norms.

*Submission of a Master's thesis for examination*

A Master’s thesis must be submitted for examination to the Faculty’s Student Affairs Office in two bound copies, of which at least one must be hard-bound. The student must simultaneously submit two additional copies of the abstract form.

He or she must also register for a maturity test on WebOodi no later than the Thursday preceding the submission date of the thesis by 23.59.

After the thesis has been approved, one thesis copy is delivered to the Theology Library in Kaisa Undergraduate Library, while the student can collect the other from the Student Affairs Office. The title page of the thesis must indicate its title, discipline and type (see example under “Guidelines for the format of theses”), the month and year of its submission and the name of its writer. The abstract form must be bound with both thesis copies to immediately follow the title page.

See the current dates for submission of the Thesis in Flamma Intranet (*Faculty of Theology – For Students – Current information on teaching – Information for degree students*).

Registration for submission of a Master’s thesis and for a maturity test takes place on WebOodi. Registration ends on WebOodi on the day before the date for Master’s thesis submission at 23.59.

For example, if you intend to submit a Master’s thesis for examination on 2 September, registration on WebOodi ends on 1 September at 23.59, and the maturity test is on 9 September.

To register for submission of a Master’s Thesis and for a maturity test, please see the thesis submission dates under “Tentit” (Examinations) in the advanced studies section of the RCD course catalogue on WebOodi.

To register for the written maturity test, a transcript from the Student Register must show that the student has completed the following studies: Major advanced studies (80 ECTS credits) and Master thesis (40 ECTS credits).

The Dean appoints a primary and secondary examiner for each thesis.

*Master’s thesis assessment*

The Faculty Council decides at a meeting on the approval and grading of a Master’s thesis. The thesis examiners submit a grade proposal, and the primary examiner also submits a written statement on the thesis. Approved Master’s theses are graded on the following scale from the highest to the lowest: laudatur, eximia cum laude approbatur, magna cum laude approbatur, cum laude approbatum, non sine laude approbatur, lubenter approbatur and approbatum.

Students can find out the grade proposed for their thesis by contacting the Faculty’s administrative services on the Wednesday prior to the Faculty Council meeting. If a student is dissatisfied with the proposed grade, he/she can ask in writing for the suspension of the grading process prior to the Faculty Council meeting. The dates of the Faculty Council meetings are listed in the course catalogue and on the Faculty website.
Students dissatisfied with the grade of their thesis can appeal in writing to the Faculty Council, which decides whether the appeal warrants the appointment of an additional examiner or any other measures. A student dissatisfied with the Faculty Council decision on his/her appeal can further appeal for its amendment to the University’s Board of Appeals Examination. Further information is available in Regulations on Degrees and the Protection of Students’ Rights at the University of Helsinki, which can be found in Flamma Intranet (Faculty of Theology - For Students – Current information on Teaching – Information for degree students).

Ensuring the high visibility of Master’s theses through the E-thesis service
The University of Helsinki provides the writers of approved Master’s theses in the Faculty of Theology with the opportunity to publish their thesis on the University’s E-thesis online service. The Faculty of Theology has set the grade cum laude approbatur as the minimum quality criterion. The E-thesis service publishes theses, dissertations and serial publications. The database can also be freely accessed from outside the University.

Instructions (in Finnish) on the publication process are available at:
http://ethesis.helsinki.fi/ohjeet/gradu.html

Written Maturity test
Students pursuing a Master’s degree in the Faculty must pass a written maturity test related to their Master’s thesis. The maturity test requires, under the Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004), the student to demonstrate his/her knowledge of the topic of the thesis.

The language of the maturity test is English. A Finnish student studying in the programme and who has been accepted with a Bachelor or Master’s degree taken abroad and written in another language than Finnish or Swedish, must write his/her maturity test in Finnish or Swedish. In this case, it is very much recommended for him/her to take the Civil Service Finnish or Swedish, depending on his/her mother tongue.

The Faculty decides on the approval or rejection of the maturity test.

Students must register for the test on WebOodi no later than the Thursday prior to the thesis submission date by 23.59. The maturity test involves writing an essay on a topic related to the student’s thesis.

See the current dates for submission of the Thesis in Flamma Intranet (Faculty of Theology – For Students – Current information on teaching – Information for degree students).

Instructions for taking the Maturity test
Select one of the given tasks and write a three- to four-page response in the form of an essay. The essay should be structured and have a natural beginning and ending. Note that a length of one to two pages is insufficient. Return the question sheet along with your response.

The maturity test is also a native-language test, and thus the following should be borne in mind when preparing your essay’s final written form:
1. A command of basic spelling and punctuation must be demonstrated;
2. The syntactic structure must be sound;
3. The text should progress by means of the language, not by diagrams, pictures or tables; references to sources must also be incorporated linguistically into the body of the text (i.e., not by means of footnotes or endnotes);
4. The text should form a structured and coherent whole;
5. The text must be understandable to the reader; the writer must not assume that the reader is already acquainted with his or her thesis; and
6. A factual style is the most pertinent for a research-based essay.

The maturity test is graded on a pass/fail basis. The maturity test is graded by the main examiner of the student's thesis and by a teacher of the student's native language. The text must be acceptable in terms of both the content and the linguistic form. If the student fails the maturity test, he/she may sign up for the next Faculty exam.

The grading of the maturity test relating to a Master's thesis is decided in the same Faculty Council meeting as is responsible for approving the Master's thesis.

Graduation
Students should request a degree diploma at least twelve days before graduation. By that time, their Master's thesis must be graded, their studies must be completed and recorded in the Student Register, and their study modules must be approved. The Dean of the Faculty of Theology issues the degree diplomas. To receive a diploma, students must sign up for a degree ceremony and/or submit a request for a diploma to Eija Molarius at the Faculty's Administrative Services (Vuorikatu 3, 2nd floor). If a student does not participate in a degree ceremony, he/she can collect the diploma from the administrative services on one of the dates below.

See the forms to be completed in order to graduate and the current Graduation schedule in Flamma Intranet (Faculty of Theology – For Students – Current information on teaching – Information for degree students).

7 Quality Assurance

7.1 Assessment of completed studies
Course examinations shall be arranged in accordance with the relevant regulations issued by the Faculty Council and taking into consideration the provisions of the Regulations on Degrees and the Protection of Students’ Rights at the University of Helsinki.

Courses and modules are graded on a scale of 0 (fail), 1 (passable), 2 (satisfactory), 3 (good), 4 (very good), and 5 (excellent). At the discretion of the Faculty Council, the pass/fail scale can be used as well, for example, for practical training and skills courses.

The Maturity test written in conjunction with the Master’s thesis is graded on a pass/fail basis. Approved Master’s theses are graded on the Latin scale of approbatur, lubenter approbatur, non sine laude approbatur, cum laude approbatur, magna cum laude approbatur, eximia cum laude approbatur and laudatur. The grade for the Master's thesis shall not affect the overall grade of advanced studies in the major subject.

7.2 Re-examination and examination in case of illness in the ordinary exam period
The rules for re-examination and examination in case of illness in the ordinary exam period follow the rules of the Host faculty responsible for any given course and exam.

7.4. Announcement of the results of examination
The results of an exam are published in two-three weeks in Flamma Intranet of Faculty of Theology. A student may see his/her own results also in WebOodi. In December and during the summer, it takes longer to get the results.

7.5 Recognition of prior credits and exemptions
The recognition and validation of prior learning refers to a framework of practices allowing students to have credits for previous learning, acquired either before or during their studies, trans-
ferred towards the degree they are pursuing at the Faculty of Theology. Credits can be awarded for prior learning acquired in formal, informal or non-formal education.

Students who hold the right to pursue a degree at the University of Helsinki and are registered for attendance may apply for credit transfer for prior learning. Credit transfer is based on learning outcomes. Students must demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes specified in the degree requirements for the relevant studies.

The maximum number of credits included in a previously completed degree which can be transferred to a Master’s degrees is 60. If studies are being substituted, the prior learning must correspond to the learning outcomes of the course or module to be substituted. Studies included in a first-cycle degree cannot be transferred to a second-cycle degree.

Any application for recognition of prior credits for parts of the RCD programme and for exemptions concerning the entire programme should be directed by the student to International Affairs Officer of the Faculty of Theology. Such applications are then dealt with in accordance with the rules and regulations obtaining at the Faculty of Theology. The Programme Committee of the RCD programme decides upon recognition of prior credits and exemptions.

7.6 Appeals
Appeals pertaining to a particular course or exam should be directed to and processed by the teacher responsible for a course or exam, according to the regulations and procedures (Regulations on Degrees and the Protection of Students’ Rights at the University of Helsinki, see for more information in Flamma Intranet (Faculty of Theology - For Students – Current information on teaching – Information for degree students).

Appeals pertaining to the general programme should be directed and processed by the Programme Leader of the RCD programme.

7.7 Syllabus and definitions of format pertaining to written exams
The syllabus of the different courses is entirely defined in its entirety by the responsible teacher. The only divergence from this is the master’s thesis, where the entire syllabus is chosen by the student subject to approval of her or his responsible teacher.

7.8 Evaluating procedures
The teaching of each course is evaluated in accordance with institutional procedures at the Host institution. Reports of these evaluations are forwarded to the Programme Committee. The Programme Committee subsequently reviews the reports in its own report and takes them into account when making proposals of the Study Plan and future Annual list of Courses.